Chapter 4

The two communities: Sivepe and Inonda

184 The villages of Sivepe and Inonda represent the extremes of population density, and therefore land availability, in the sub-district. There are significant differences between them in resources and in the degree and character of their participation in the monetary economy and their interactions with the principal external agencies.

Sivepe

133 Sivepe is situated 1,300 feet above sea level on the lower north-
[134] western slopes of Mt Lamington. Its land is classified by the CSIRO survey (1964:32) as belonging to the Awala Land System and is characterised by fertile loam topsoils and a close-textured drainage
137 system. The vegetation comprises predominantly secondary forest and various stages of regrowth, with little grassland. The land-
311 use potential is regarded as high and the fertile, well-drained soils are best suited for perennial (tree) crops.

301 The village is located in the most densely settled part of the sub-district, the Saiho census division, and there are eighteen villages within a radius of three miles (see Map 3). It has been
[131] on its present site for about ten years, but preparation of a new site, less than one mile away, was commenced late in 1964. Sivepe is twenty-eight miles from Popondetta by road, the last three miles being a little-used jeep track linking Awala with the villages on the lower slopes of Mt Lamington. Consequently, coffee and rubber have to be carried to Awala (or nearby Saiho) to be sold and purchases are normally made in the trade stores there. At Awala are a European rubber plantation, a rubber factory which purchases village latex and a well-stocked trade store. At Saiho are two trade stores, the principal Administration hospital for the Northern District (where medical orderlies and infant welfare nurses are trained) and a primary 'T' school. In mid-1964 a daily bus service was established between Saiho and Popondetta.

49 Also in mid-1964, several villages voluntarily commenced the
[49] construction of a new all-weather road, linking Sasembata mission

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 37]

station with Boru on the main road near Awala and passing within a mile of Sivepe, but it was not completed by the onset of the wet season. It was intended that this would be used by the OCGS and other purchasers of produce. This was the main reason for the Sivepe people's decision to move their village to a site within 200 yards of Sasembata mission station.

Sasembata mission is a head station of the Anglican mission. Among its facilities are a church, administered by an Orokaiva priest, a hospital and infant welfare clinic run by a Papuan medical orderly but supervised from the Administration hospital at Saiho, and a primary school with 400 children on the roll.[1] The school includes classes up to Standard V and is headed by an Australian with the assistance of ten Papuan teachers. A small trade store is operated by Oro Ltd at Kongohambo village adjoining the mission station.

Sivepe itself is laid out as a line village, with lineage members tending to occupy adjoining houses (see Map 4). The houses have a mean size of 229 sq ft and are built entirely of local materials, with the exception of nails which are now commonly used.

Three clan branches are represented in the village and two of these, the Jegase and Timumu clans,[2] comprised the survey sample (55.3 per cent of the total village population of 114 in January 1964), the characteristics of which reveal them to be representative of the population as a whole.[3]

The population of the sample declined by 20.6 per cent, from 63 to 50 persons, over the survey period. Ten of the 17 departures migrated to other villages and the rest sought wage employment within the district or in Port Moresby. This continuing out-migration intensified certain characteristics of the village's labour force, for by January 1965, 37.8 per cent of the potential adult male labour force was absent, the majority on a long-term basis in unskilled or semi-skilled work or low-ranking positions in government service.[4] In three cases, wives and children remained in the village and were supported by close kin. In January 1965, there were only two men remaining in the 20 to 34 years age groups.

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[1] An estimated 80 per cent of the children in the area receive some schooling.

[2] Clansmen also reside in twelve other villages, all within a radius of 3.7 miles of Sivepe.

[3] See Appendix 1 and Fig. 4:1.A

[4] See Appendix 2.C

A, [See Category 163, p. 307--Analyst]

B, [See Category 162, p. 39--Analyst]

C, [See Category 166, p. 308--Analyst]

444 Each trader in group I still holds a current trading licence and intends to re-open his store at some future date. A closed his store after only two months of operation, because his duties as a local government councillor were too time-consuming. He intended to resign before the next election in June 1966 and re-open his store.

444 B started his store in 1961 with the relatively large capital
472 of $478, of which $300 was his own money, and the remainder his
452 younger brother's. The store was built some distance from his house, but when $240 was stolen from the store in 1962, the two brothers built a new store adjacent to B's house. It was closed in June 1964. Credit had been given too freely and $157.48 was still outstanding late in 1965, and a European stated that B had
[474] been selling goods well below cost price. Competition from a
[477] local co-operative store which B helped to establish (and with which he is still closely associated) reduced his turnover. B bought his stocks on credit from Oro Ltd, and built up a large debt until further credit was refused. B still owes $220 to Oro Ltd, and due to insufficient understanding of the system, feels that he has been deceived.

Subjects C and D were awaiting the proceeds of their next cash crop sale with which to restock their stores.

444 The stores owned by group II traders have so far been only moderately successful. With the exception of G, who opened his store only six months ago, they have operated their stores for at least nineteen months. E has only recently re-opened his store, after it had been closed for four months.

[426] Group III. Trader I started his store with $200 which was lent him by his younger brother-in-law, who is a clerk with a commercial firm at Lae. The brother-in-law pays all store bills, and I had repaid him $104.

[451] J's trade store was managed by his elder brother, who could neither read nor write and did not keep any store books.

444 K started his store with $390, helped by his younger brother
474 who works in Port Moresby. K runs the store on a quasi co-operative basis, with forty-two shareholders belonging to his own and another clan. His brother contributed $200 to the initial cost, and the
[499] value of the other shares varied between 50 cents and $10. All are ultimately to be $10. Most of the store's turnover comes from other villages and the people of K's village are at present building a road to attract more people to the store.

444 L began her store with $206; when she is away, it is managed by her father.